

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2124

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 0360

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC, PA
SUBJ: INVITATIONS TO OBSERVE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

REF: STATE 20824

1. IN CONSIDERING AN APPROPRIATE REPLY TO STROESSNER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER (REFTEL), WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THE GOP INEVITABLY WOULD TRY TO EXPLOIT THE PRESENCE OF ANY OFFICIAL AMERICAN OBSERVER AS INDICATING U.S. ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOP'S CONTENTION THAT THE ELECTIONS WILL BE FREE AND DEMOCRATIC. IN FACT, THEY WILL BE EVEN MORE OF A FARCE THAN PRECEDING STROESSNER "ELECTIONS."

2. IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS, THE GOP HAS UNILATERALLY AMENDED THE CONSTITUTION SO THAT STROESSNER MIGHT SUCCEED HIMSELF INDEFINITELY. IT THEN DEMOLISHED THE TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION PARTIES BY DENYING THEM LEGAL STATUS, AND GRANTED RECOGNITION INSTEAD TO TWO PHANTOM GROUPS AGAINST WHOSE DISCREDITED CANDIDATES STROESSNER WILL STAND FOR ELECTION. THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER THE GOP HAS ALREADY DECIDED STROESSNER'S LANDSLIDE VICTORY WILL GIVE HIM 80 PER CENT OF THE VOTE, OR SOMETHING CLOSER TO 90 PER CENT.

3. THE U.S. THEREFORE SHOULD DECLINE ANY INVITATIONS TO
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SEND OBSERVERS. THIS SHOULD APPLY AS WELL TO VOICE OF AMERICAN DIRECTOR GOLDCHAIN AND HIS WIFE, TO WHOM FONMIN NOGUES HAS ASKED ME TO TRANSMIT AN OFFICIAL INVITATION TO TRAVEL TO ASUNCION AT GOP EXPENSE FOR THE ELECTIONS.

4. IT OCCURS TO ME THAT A WAY OF REPLYING TO STROESSNER'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT MIGHT BE TO INFORM HIM THAT AS THE

PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF MY DUTIES, I SHALL BE OBSERVING THE ELECTIONS AND REPORTING THEIR OUTCOME. (I HAD CONSIDERED ALSO SUGGESTING THAT MENTION MIGHT BE MADE OF THE STATE OF SIEGE AS A REASON FOR NOT SENDING ANY OBSERVERS, BUT ON REFLECTION BELIEVE A REPLY WHICH IS SHORT AND TO THE POINT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE.)

5. UPON AUTHORIZATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT, I WOULD PROPOSE TO INFORM FONMIN NOGUES THAT MR. AND MRS. GOLDCHAIN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT HIS INVITATION.

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